



*Ideas*  
*for*  
*Unity Ceremonies*

Courtesy of:

*Patrick Smiley*  
W E D D I N G S

[www.patricksmileyweddings.com](http://www.patricksmileyweddings.com)

Ph: 403-609-0876 Email: [psmiley@me.com](mailto:psmiley@me.com)

*Alberta*  Authorized  
Marriage Commissioner

# Unity Ceremonies

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## Sand Ceremony

During this ceremony the couple each has an individual container of sand. They join together to pour into one larger container. It is symbolic of the fact that just as the grains of sand could never again be separated, so will the union be, forever entwined and forever inseparable.

**Materials:** Sand, usually in two different colors. One container for each person participating filled with a little sand. One large empty container for the combined sand. Supplies are available in stores such as Michael's and online at Etsy and Amazon.

### PROS

- ~ Excellent way to include children in the vows and wedding ceremony
- ~ Creates a stunning keepsake that can be displayed for years and serve as a constant reminder of the promises that you have made one another.
- ~ 100% customizable - whatever your situation, the sand ceremony can be used to reflect it.

### CONS (Possible)

- ~Where a ceremony is held outdoors, wind, rain and other factors can make it difficult to pour the sand
- ~The layers can shift in transit. This can be prevented with a bit of planning. Select a friend to take responsibility for the finished sand ceremony vase to transport it from the venue to your home. It will need to be kept upright or you may lose the integrity of the layers.

## **Sand Ceremony 1**

Bride and Groom, today you join your separate lives together. The two separate bottles of sand symbolize your separate lives, separate families and separate sets of friends.

They represent all that you are and all that you will ever be as an individual. They also represent your lives before today.

As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers of sand will be blended and joined together as one, yet each individual grain of sand remains unique.

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the original containers, so will your marriage be.

## **Sand Ceremony 2**

Bride and Groom, you have just sealed your relationship by the giving and receiving of rings and this is a pledge between two people who agree that they will commit themselves to one another throughout their lives.

Today, this relationship is also symbolized through the pouring of these two individual containers of sand. One, representing you, Bride and one representing you Groom and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be.

As these two containers of sand are poured into the third container, the individual containers of sand will be blended and joined together as one, yet each individual grain of sand remains unique.

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated, our wish for you today is that your lives together would be blended like the seven seas and may your love swirl around each other like the changing tides.

## **Family Sand Ceremony**

Bride and Groom, today you are making a life-long commitment to share the rest of your lives with each other and honor your children as well.

Your family relationship is symbolized through the pouring of these individual containers of sand; one, representing you, Bride and all that you were, all that you are, and all that you will ever be, one representing you, Groom, and all that you were and all that you are, and all that you will ever be and another container for each of the children.

The children who will share in this marriage are (insert names here). The gathering of this new family will have a deep influence upon them. We realize that in order for the home to be a happy one, it is essential that there be love and understanding between the children and the adults being married.

As you each hold your sand the separate containers of sand represent your lives to this moment; individual and unique.

As you now combine your sand together, your lives also join together as one family.

You may now blend the sand together symbolizing the uniting of the children and bride and groom into one.

Just as these grains of sand can never be separated and poured again into the original containers, so will your marriage and your family be.



## Candle Lighting

Similarly symbolic to the sand ceremony. Two flames representing the individuals are joined to light a center candle. Each person lights a single taper candle. The couple then brings the flames together to light a larger middle candle. The tapers remain lit and are replaced in their holders to represent two coming together while maintaining individuality. Although this is frequently considered a Christian tradition, this is often chosen in interfaith and civil ceremonies as well. Can be done with just the couple or including other family members.

**Materials:** *One center candle (and hurricane cover if it's outside), two side taper candles in holders, lighter or small votive candle to be pre-lit for lighting tapers.*

### **PROS**

~ It is a familiar unity ceremony to most, if not all of your guests

### **CONS (Possible)**

~ Where a ceremony is held outdoors, wind, rain and other factors can make it difficult to light the candles and keep them lit.

~ Candles can tip, drip or pose a burn threat to you, your clothing or the area that the candle lighting takes place. Ensure that candle sticks are not too tall and fit easily and deeply into their wells.

## **Unity Candle Ceremony 1**

Bride and Groom, together as you light this candle of unity, you symbolize the flame of your own individual selves joining to ignite the partnership of marriage.

You also bring the warmth, strength and wisdom of your family's fire as kindling for your own.

As Bride and Groom, your flames are separate, yet they feed the same fire.

From this day onward, may you bask in the beauty of the light of your love, may its light shine bright and steady upon your path together and may its heat keep you warm through all the days of your lives and beyond.

## **Unity Candle Ceremony 2**

Bride and Groom have chosen to affirm their love by the lighting of a unity candle.

They have also asked their families to participate in the lighting ceremony. In so doing, they signal their desire to not only join as one in their union but to also unite two families together as one.

From every human being there rises a light and when two souls that are destined for each other find one another, their streams of light flow together and a single, brighter light goes forth from their united being.



## Love Letter and Wine Box Ceremony

The Love Letter and Wine Box ceremony can become a wonderfully romantic tradition on your anniversary every year. Substitute Scotch or Whisky that you both enjoy if wine isn't your first choice. Each of you write love letters to each other before the ceremony and these will be sealed in the box with the wine to open and read to each other on your 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary or 5<sup>th</sup>, whatever you decide. Instead of love letters, your personal vows can be used or just the wine alone.

*Materials: A wine box and wine or a spirit of your choice. Some come with glasses, others are just for the bottle. They are available in stores, on line or custom made. I recommend one that uses a simple latch with a lock and key instead of one that is to be nailed shut. Look for wine boxes here [https://www.etsy.com/ca/search?q=wine box](https://www.etsy.com/ca/search?q=wine%20box)*

### **PROS**

- ~ It is a more unique ceremony than either the sand or candle ceremonies
- ~ It is highly customizable
- ~ You can repeat it every year on your anniversary

### **CONS (Possible)**

- ~ You have to find a box you like and it must fit your bottle of choice
- ~ Not everyone wants to or can write a love letter and can put a bit of pressure on one partner. In this case, just go with the bottle alone or store your ceremony booklet in the box as well.
- ~ Travelling with a heavy bottle can be difficult, but the script can be altered where you put the bottle in when you get home

## **Love Letter and Wine Box Ceremony 1**

Bride and Groom have chosen as a couple to perform a Love Letter & Wine Box ceremony.

This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other.

The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry.

The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written.

Should Bride and Groom ever find their marriage facing hardships, they will open this box, sit and drink the wine together, then read the letters they wrote to one another to be reminded of the reasons why they are together.

The hope is, however, that Bride and Groom will never have a reason to open this box until your anniversary.

And if this is the case, they are to open this box to share and enjoy on their 1st year wedding anniversary, replenish and repeat on every anniversary.

## **Love Letter and Wine Box Ceremony 2**

Bride and Groom have chosen as a couple to perform a Love Letter & Wine Box ceremony. This box contains a bottle of wine, two glasses, and a love letter from each to the other.

The letters describe the good qualities they find in one another, the reasons they fell in love, and their reasons for choosing to marry. The letters are sealed in individual envelopes and they have not seen what the other has written.

You have created your very own “romantic” time capsule to be opened on your 5th wedding anniversary.

I recommend that you keep the box in a place of honor prominently displayed in your home as a constant reminder of your commitment to each other.

Bride and Groom should you ever find your marriage enduring insurmountable hardships, you are to as a couple, open this box, sit and drink the wine together, then separate and read the letters you wrote to one another when you were united as a couple in marriage.

By reading these love letters you will reflect upon the reasons you fell in love and chose to marry each other here today. The hope is, however, that you will never have a reason to open this box. And if this is the case, you are to open this box to share and enjoy on your 5th year wedding anniversary!

### **Love Letter and Wine Box Ceremony 3**

Like good wine, a great love will deepen and mature with age.

As a part of today's ceremony, Bride and Groom have captured their thoughts leading up to this day in personal notes to each other.

Also they have asked their parents (or best man / maid of honor or other loved ones) to compose notes as well, containing their thoughts and their most important piece of advice to the couple as they journey through life together.

These notes will now be sealed in this box to be opened and shared together with a bottle of wine on a future anniversary celebration. It is at this time I would ask the parents to come forward and place their note and a bottle of wine inside this box.

These messages and wine will be shared by Bride and Groom on their 1st and 5th anniversaries.

And I now ask that Bride and Groom place their notes to each other with a bottle of wine they have selected to share on their 10th anniversary celebration.

On that joyous day INSERT DATE they will get to reflect on the events and emotions they shared on this wonderful day.

They can also reminisce about all of the wonderful memories they will have made over the last ten years and dream of all of those yet to come.



## Handfasting Ceremony

This is an ancient Celtic tradition and may well be the origin of the saying tying the knot.

The officiant shares a reading while wrapping a cord over the couple's hands and looping it in a "knot". This ritual also provides the option for the attendants/bridal party to be included by passing the cord down the line as they offer blessings/words of wisdom.

*Materials: Handfasting cord or ribbon, etc.*

### **PROS**

- ~ It is a unique ceremony that is not done at a lot of weddings
- ~ It is highly customizable in that you can use different types of cords, ribbons, scarves and incorporate a family heirloom into the ceremony

### **CONS (Possible)**

- ~ There are no obvious ones that come to mind

## Handfasting Ceremony 1

As this knot is tied, so are your lives now bound.

Woven into this cord, imbued into its very fibers, are all the hopes of your friends and family, and of yourselves, for your new life together.

With the fashioning of this knot do I tie all the desires, dreams, love, and happiness wished here in this place to your lives for as long as love shall last.

In the joining of hands and the fashion of a knot, so are your lives now bound, one to another.

By this cord you are thus bound to your vow.

May this knot remain tied for as long as love shall last.

May this cord draw your hands together in love, never to be used in anger.

May the vows you have spoken never grow bitter in your mouths.

As any child discovers when they are learning to tie their own shoes, the first move is to cross the ends.

As your hands are bound by this cord, so is your partnership held by the symbol of this knot.

May it be granted that what is done before the gods be not undone by man.

Two entwined in love, bound by commitment and fear, sadness and joy, by hardship and victory, anger and reconciliation, all of which brings strength to this union.

Hold tight to one another through both good times and bad, and watch as your strength grows.

## **Handfasting Ceremony 2**

Know now before you go further, that since your lives have crossed in this life you have formed ties between each other.

As you seek to enter this state of matrimony you should strive to make real, the ideals which give meaning to both this ceremony and the institution of marriage.

Do you still seek to enter this ceremony?

Bride and Groom say, "We do."

**Blessing of the Hands**

These are the hands that will passionately love you and cherish you through the years, for a lifetime of happiness.

These are the hands that will countless times wipe the tears from your eyes: tears of sorrow and tears of joy.

These are the hands that will comfort you in illness, and hold you when fear or grief racks your mind.

These are the hands that will hold you tight as you struggle through difficult times.

These are the hands that will give you support and encourage you to chase your dreams. Together, everything you wish for can be realized.

**Prepare the cords**

Back in earlier years, the hands would be bound with whatever was available – vines, colorful cords, or scarf. Today we will use these cords to symbolize the binding, or promises.

**The first promise**

Groom, Will you be Bride's faithful partner for life?

Groom says, "I will."

Bride, will you be Groom's faithful partner for life?

Bride says, "I will."

Will you be each other's constant friends and one true love?

Bride and Groom say, "We will."

First cord is draped across Bride and Groom's hands  
And so the first binding is made.

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### **The second promise**

Bride, do you promise to love Groom without reservation?

Bride says, "I will."

Groom, do you promise to love Bride without reservation?

Groom says, "I will."

Will both of you stand by one another in sickness and in health, in plenty and in want?

Bride and Groom say, "We will."

Second cord is draped across Bride and Groom's hands

And so the second binding is made.

### **The third promise**

Bride, will you stand together with Groom your times of joy and sorrow?

Bride says, "I will."

Groom, will you stand together with Bride your times of joy and sorrow?

Groom says, "I will."

Will you share the burdens of each so that your spirits may grow in this union?

Bride and Groom say, "We will."

Third cord is draped across Bride and Groom's hands

And so the third binding is made.

### **The fourth promise**

Groom will you always to be open and honest with Bride, for as long as you both shall live?

Groom says, "I will."

Bride, will you always to be open and honest with Groom, for as long as you both shall live?

Bride says, "I will."

Will you dream together to create new realities and hopes for this marriage?

Bride and Groom say, "We will."

Fourth cord is draped across Bride and Groom's hands

And so the fourth binding is made.

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**The fifth promise**

Bride, Will you honor this man?

Bride says, "I will."

Groom, Will you honor this woman?

Groom says, "I will."

Will you both seek to cherish and strengthen that honor?

Bride and Groom say, "We will."

Sixth cord is draped across Bride and Groom's hands

And so the fifth binding is made.

**Binding of all promises**

The knots of this binding are not formed by these cords but instead by your vows. Either of you may drop the cords, for as always, you hold in your own hands the making or breaking of this union.



## Tree Planting

This symbolizes the need for both people to nurture the marriage and make it grow. The couple plants the tree or plant as the officiant shares the symbolism behind the ritual, personalized for each specific type of plant (i.e. lemon tree vs. bonsai tree, etc.).

*Materials: Plant in pot, cup of soil, cup of water, trowel.*

### **PROS**

- ~ It is a unique ceremony that is not done at a lot of weddings.
- ~ It provides a lasting memento of your wedding day.

### **CONS (Possible)**

- ~ If it will be a large tree eventually, where will it ultimately be planted?
- ~ If you have to walk quite a way to the ceremony site, carrying a large pot and water to and from the site must be considered.

## Tree Planting Ceremony 1

Bride and Groom will now take part in a Tree Planting Ceremony, to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as they become each others family today.

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and change.

Let your relationship and your love for each other be like this tree you plant today. Let it grow tall and strong. Let it stand tall during the harsh winds and rains and storms, and come through unscathed. Like a tree, your marriage must be resilient. It must weather the challenges of daily life and the passage of time. And just like the tree you are planting, marriage requires constant nurturing and nourishment.

After the ceremony, the couple plants the tree in at their home or a special location to symbolize the putting down of roots, longevity and strength in their marriage.

## Tree Planting Ceremony 2

Bride and Groom will now take part in a Unity Tree Planting Ceremony, to symbolize the roots of their relationship, and the continued growth of their love, as they become each others family today.

Bride and Groom, today you stand before us ready to share the rest of your lives together as a married couple. But long before today your parents provided you with a foundation of love and caring which has brought you to this point. We will start by adding dirt from Brides childhood home and dirt from Groom's childhood home. This dirt symbolizes their individual families, it has been through their years of love and support, that have helped shaped who Bride and groom are today,... a man and a woman who are ready to be committed, in a loving marriage of their own... *(Bride and groom add dirt from childhood home-or perhaps the mother will add it-whatever you want)*

Love is the essence of human experience and emotion. It is the root of all and everything we, as humans, do. Love enriches our experience, and fills our lives with meaning. It gives us a firm base from which to grow, to learn, and change.



## Ceremonies Involving Children

Parents and children can make vows to one another (dependent on the children's ages). Parents may also choose to give children gifts during the ceremony, or conduct a family Sand or Candle Ceremony.

### Ceremony Ideas

1. Add additional wording to your vows to your spouse:

"I promise to be a good and faithful husband/wife to you, and also a patient, loving father/mother to (children's names), caring for them and providing for them as my own. I promise to be their strength and their emotional support, loving them with all my heart forever."

2. Have a separate vow ceremony for the blended family after the Bride and Groom's vows to each other

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## Ceremony 1

**Groom:** (children's names), I want you to know that I dearly love your mother. We have become very good friends over time and we have learned to love each other.

As you have so graciously shared this wonderful woman with me, so will I share the love I feel for her with you.

Together, we will learn much more about each other.

I promise also to be fair and to be honest, to be available for you as I am for your mom, and in due time, to earn your love, respect and true friendship.

I will not attempt to replace anyone, but to make a place in your hearts that is for me alone. I will be father and friend, and I will cherish my life with all of you.

On this day when I marry your mom, I marry you, and I promise to love and support you as my own."

**Bride:** "(children's names), I want you to know that I dearly love your father. We have become very good friends over the weeks and months and we have learned to love each other.

As you have so graciously shared this wonderful man with me, so will I share the love I feel for him with both of you.

Together, we will learn much more about each other.

I promise also to be fair and to be honest, to be available for you as I am for your dad, and in due time, to earn your love, respect and true friendship.

I will not attempt to replace anyone, but to make a place in your hearts that is for me alone. I will be mother and friend, and I will cherish my life with both of you.

On this day when I marry your dad, I marry you, and I promise to love and support you as my own."

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The bride and groom's children then responded to the following vows when read by the officiant:

(Children's names), do you promise to love your mother and her new husband?

Children respond: "I do."

Do you promise to support their marriage and your new family?

Children respond: "I do."

Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being their children, and to encourage them, support them, and accept them just as our heavenly Father accepts us?

Children respond: "I do."

(Children' names), do you promise to love your father and his new wife?

Children respond: "I do."

Do you promise to support their marriage and your new family?

Children respond: "I do."

Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being their children, and to encourage them, support them, and accept them just as our heavenly Father accepts us?

Children respond: "I do."

## **Children's Ceremony 2**

### **1. Invite Child (or Children) to stand with their parent**

Officiant: Let it be known that Bride and Groom do not enter this commitment alone.

[Groom] brings with him an amazing and vibrant 13 year old son... [Child's First Name], will you please come forward and stand between your Father and [Partner]. Over the years, the three of you have gotten to know each other; sharing meals, hanging out, and just spending time together. You have successfully melded into a modern-day family.

Today [Child's Name], your support to this marriage is clear. [Bride] joins this family circle as your father's wife, as a friend that you can count on and a woman who loves both of you very much.

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## **2. Introduction of the child/children through the words of parent and partner.**

Officiant: I would like to tell all of you some things that [Groom] and [Partner] think all of you should know about this amazing young person...[Child's Full Birth Name]

Your Father tells me...

(Three qualities Father recognizes and/or admires about his child)

And [Partner] shared with me that...

(Three qualities [Partner] recognizes and/or admires about the child)

## **3. Commemorative Gift (bestowed on the child/children by the couple. Examples: necklace with birth stone, bracelet, family heirloom.)**

Officiant: As a way to commemorate this momentous occasion, your Father and [Partner] have a gift for you, and they would like to present it to you now, is that okay?

[Parents give gift to child; if jewelry, put it on them. Whatever it is, tell the guests] **4.**

## **Vows: to Child from Both Adults (Parent / Partner will need to write these.)**

Officiant: [Groom], [Bride] and [Child] would you please join hands to form your family circle?

[Groom/Father] repeat after me...

[Child], I want you to know how lucky I feel every day just knowing you. You are the energy that flows through my veins. You inspire me and I can't imagine the man that I would have become without you in my life. Thank you for accepting Bride into our world. Nobody knows more than you how she has been there for both of us. You are an amazing young man and an honorable human being that I am proud to call my son. I love you.

[Bride] repeat after me...

[Child], I have known you since the day you were born. . . You and your father are the people who know me best in this world, the people I eat with every day, the first I see in the morning and the last at night. The two of you are my strength and my world. We are the fearsome threesome, and I consider you to be one of the most important people in my life. I love you.

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#### **4.1 Vows: Three Promises Adults and Child**

Officiant: [Groom], [Bride] and [Child] would you please join hands to form your family circle? I am going to ask all of you 3 questions. I would like all of you to answer each of them with, "I Promise!"

Do you promise to love, respect and protect each other from this day forward?

All 3: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to always try to be the best person you can be?

All 3: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to accept the responsibility of being a family, and encourage, and support each other in your new life together?

All 3: "I Promise!"

#### **4.2 Vows: Three Promises from the Children**

(When both partners have children these are promises the kids make to the Family Unit. The couple usually creates the questions so that they relate to their children. Kids are standing with their parents).

Officiant: [Kid A], [Kid B] and [Kid C], I am going to ask you 3 questions. I would like all of you to answer each of them with, "I Promise!"

Do you promise to be tolerant, respectful and accepting of each other's differences?

KIDS: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to always work out disagreements so that your friendships can grow stronger?

KIDS: "I Promise!"

Do you promise to keep your rooms clean and the dirty dishes out of the basement?"

KIDS: "I Promise!"

#### **5. Family Blessing (I always close the ritual with blessings for the family and a group hug before asking the child/children to return to their seats).**

Officiant: I ask that your home be a place of happiness for all who enter it, and a place where the old and the young are renewed in each others' company, a place for growing, a place for music and celebration, a place for laughter and goofing off.

And when life seems to be too much or you just had a rough day, may your home always be a place of refuge where every one of you can find the comfort of always knowing that you will be accepted and loved unconditionally.

